



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on July 27, 2016

Last Charge Dropped Against Undercover Investigators at Planned Parenthood

On Tuesday, the last remaining charge against David Daleiden, of the Center for Medical Progress, and investigator Sandra Merritt, in Texas, was dropped. The pro-life advocates underwent what many would call a political witch hunt and were charged for making undercover videos exposing Planned Parenthood's fetal organ harvesting scheme.

"David Daleiden used standard undercover journalism techniques and followed all applicable laws in doing so," said Peter Breen of the Thomas More Society, which represented Daleiden. "This meritless and retaliatory prosecution should never have been brought."



Last year, Daleiden and the Center for Medical Progress released 11 videos that revealed illegal activities related to fetal organ harvesting at Planned Parenthood. These activities included altering abortion procedures to procure fetal tissue, as well as selling fetal tissue for profit. One particularly damning video also revealed that company StemExpress did not always obtain consent from mothers to use their fetal tissue, a practice that Fox News noted would be "a serious ethical breach."

The videos featured secretly recorded comments from executives of Planned Parenthood and StemExpress, a California-based company that partnered with Planned Parenthood to supply human blood, cells, and tissue products to biomedical researchers. The videos included undercover footage from clinics — including footage of fetal tissue being handled by workers, footage of fetal tissue from aborted pregnancies, and on-camera interviews with Holly O'Donnell, a former StemExpress procurement technician who admitted in one of the videos that she has encountered "fetuses" that still had beating hearts.

Daleiden had hoped that the videos would prompt lawmakers to investigate Planned Parenthood and ultimately defund it, but instead authorities turned their attention to Daleiden and the CMP.

Last July, for example, California Attorney General Kamala Harris announced that she would be investigating whether CMP violated state charity registration or reporting requirements. The California Department of Justice went so far as to raid Daleiden's home earlier this year and seize his laptop and hard drives, which contained information obtained during his 30-month investigation into Planned Parenthood.

Notably, Harris has ties to Planned Parenthood, even receiving \$15,000 in contributions from the abortion giant in 2014 during her AG reelection campaign.

And in January, Harris County, Texas District Attorney Devon Anderson not only dropped the investigation of Planned Parenthood, but led the grand jury to indict Daleiden and his colleague, Sandra



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Merritt, on multiple charges, including using fake driver's licenses to gain access to a Houston clinic and attempting to solicit the sale of human organs. Perhaps not coincidentally, Anderson had also received campaign contributions, not from Planned Parenthood, but from the defense attorney for abortionist Douglas Karpen, described as the Kermit Gosnell of Texas, reports *The Federalist*. Likewise, Assistant District Attorney Lauren Reeder has been a board member for Planned Parenthood of the Gulf Coast since 2013, LifeNews.com reports.

In June, Judge Diane Bull dismissed the charge against Daleiden of attempting to solicit the sale of human organs.

And on Tuesday, District Judge Brock Thomas dismissed the last charge of tampering with government records against Daleiden and Merritt upon the request of the Harris County prosecutor's office. Had they been convicted, they would have faced up to 20 years in prison.

According to Anderson, her office was compelled to drop the charges because it was procedurally limited to what it could investigate under Texas law. "In light of this and after careful research and review, this office dismissed the indictments," Anderson said, without offering additional information, Yahoo News reports.

Planned Parenthood of the Gulf Coast released its own statement about the dropped charges, bitterly opining that the decision to drop the charges does not necessarily vindicate Daleiden. "Today, the Harris County prosecutor suddenly dropped the pending felony charges against Daleiden, relying on a technical concern relating to the grand jury proceedings. This is not the same as finding that Daleiden is innocent of the criminal charges," the statement reads.

For Daleiden, the dropped charges represent a preservation of journalists' First Amendment rights. "The dismissal of the bogus, politically motivated charges against [Center for Medical Progress] project lead David Daleiden and investigator Sandra Merritt is a resounding vindication of the First Amendment rights of all citizen journalists, and also a clear warning to any of Planned Parenthood's political cronies who would attack whistleblowers to protect Planned Parenthood from scrutiny," the Center for Medical Progress said in a statement. "Planned Parenthood tried to collude with public officials to manipulate the legal process to their own benefit, and they failed."

Daleiden also noted that while he beat the charges, his videos achieved CMP's goal of sparking a vital investigation into Planned Parenthood's practices. "A year after the release of the undercover videos, the ongoing nationwide investigation of Planned Parenthood by the House Select Investigative Panel makes clear that Planned Parenthood is the guilty party in the harvesting and trafficking of baby body parts for profit," Daleiden stated.



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